

HALLUX VARUS CORRECTION WITH TENDON TRANSFER

Postoperative Recovery Protocol

Type of Procedure:	Outpatient
Length of Procedure:	1 hour
Anesthesia:	Twilight (local anesthetic with intravenous sedation)

Hallux varus: what is it?

Hallux varus is a condition in which the big toe begins to deviate away from the midline of the foot. Hallux varus most commonly develops after a failure of bunion surgery. There are however other conditions which may lead to hallux varus including trauma, removal of a sesamoid bone from the big toe joint and some forms of arthritis.

As the big toe deviates, it begins to get stiff. This stiffness can occur at one or both of the joints of the big toe. Treatment is far easier when the big toe remains flexible. As the toe joints stiffen, then the ability to correct the deformity and keep the big toe flexible is quite limited, and a fusion of the toe needs to be performed.

The treatment of hallux varus depends upon how bothersome the condition is. If the deformity is mild and the toe remains flexible no treatment is required at all. If the toe begins to deviate considerably and is becoming stiff then this will be quite uncomfortable with shoe wear, and surgery is usually required to correct the toe.

Correction depends on the flexibility of both joints of the big toe and whether or not arthritis is present. Often, a tendon transfer is performed by shifting tendons around the big toe to straighten it and maintain flexibility. One of the more popular procedures which is used, is to redirect a small tendon of the big toe (the extensor hallucis brevis transfer or the Myerson procedure). If there is severe arthritis or stiffness or deformity of the toe, then a tendon transfer cannot be performed and often, a fusion of the joint is required.

Hallux varus correction: general facts

- This operation is designed to correct the big toe deformity, and in order to correct it, the ligaments have to be tightened on the one side, and loosened on the other side of the joint.
- Tightening or repairing the ligaments is however not strong enough to maintain correction, and a tendon transfer must be performed, using a small tendon on the side of the big toe for the transfer, called the extensor hallucis brevis.
- The toe can never however be normal, and although some flexibility will be present, there will always be some stiffness in the joint.
- As with all types of big toe surgery, you will be able to wear shoes more comfortably. This does not mean however that you will always be able to wear narrow tight shoes.



General recovery facts

- You can expect moderate pain for a few days
- You are *allowed* to walk on the foot the day after surgery
- Many patients are however not able to walk on the foot because of pain
- You may use crutches or a walker if you need support
- You may drive by about 4 days if it is your left foot, and 7 days if your right foot
- The foot needs to be bandaged for about 3-4 weeks
- You will not be able to get the foot wet while the foot is bandaged
- You can start exercising at about 4 weeks
- You will be able to wear a sneaker type shoe at about 4 weeks
- During recovery do not walk at all without the surgical shoe
- The foot will remain puffy and swollen for 4-6 months
- Certain shoes cannot be worn while the front of the foot is swollen

Specific Post-Operative Course

Day 1

1. Foot wrapped in bulky bandage and surgical shoe
2. Ice, elevate, take pain medication
3. Expect numbness in foot 12-24 hours then moderate pain
4. Blood drainage through bandage expected
5. Do not change bandage.
6. Do not remove surgical shoe – even at night

Week 1

1. Use the surgical shoe only
2. Do not remove surgical shoe – even at night
3. Moderate pain – continue pain medication,
4. Ice, elevate the foot as much as possible
5. Continue walking in surgical shoe
6. May drive with caution in surgical shoe
7. If left foot, may be able to drive sooner
8. Do not change dressing unless instructed



Day 7-10

- First follow-up in the office, X-rays taken
- Dressing changed- bandaging done, toes strapped
- Full weight-bearing in a surgical shoe

Week 4

- Start wearing sneaker type shoe
- Orthotic support in the shoe is important



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